

**The Creed of Allah: Discourse on the Methodology and Ideology of the
Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad (JASLDAWAJ) As
Articulated in Late Muhammad Yusuf's Hazihi Aqidatuna Wa Man Haju
Da'awatuna**

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Abstract

In the past nine years the pseudo-religious conflict engendered by the rise of the Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad (JASLDAWAJ) has arguably remained an enduring one that has consumed parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Invariably, this has had far-reaching implications for peace and security within Nigeria and beyond. Analyzing the book of the founder of JASLDAWAJ, late Muhammad Yusuf, Hazihi Aqidatuna Wa Man Haju Da'awatuna, the methodology and ideology that still propel the group are examined in detail. Despite the influence of the creed, repeated clashes and schisms within the group are still critical in the sustenance of the crisis. Looking at the theory of *Weltanschauung* from the Islamic perspective, the deficiency of the Western perspective, which sees such crisis as arising and subsisting because of civilizational crisis and search for a new world order, is highlighted. Apparently, the reason for the continuity of such crisis is embedded in the Islamic quest for social justice. Therefore, the study submits that the prospect for tackling the group is dependent upon designing and implementing a durable model of conflict resolution that will take cognizance of the group's creed without compromising the orthodox Islamic framework.

Introduction

“This book (Hazihi Aqidatuna Wa Man Haju Da’awatuna), represents us and everything we represent... It is the creed of Allah”¹

- Preface to First edition of Hazihi

Allah, His names, attributes and all the divine appellations exclusive to Him, runs like leitmotif in the entire book of Hazihi, the subject matter of this discourse. Its thematic outline concurs directly with the traditions of Durkheimian and Nisbetian sociological explanations, anchored in part on the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane.² Temporally, the ‘unspoken ideology’ of Nigeria (Malami 2018: 245-246), persistently challenged by Yusuf, is identified as one’s ‘personal freedom’, which is inextricably linked to the constitution. This ideology is seen as the minimal, comprehensive or total way of life of Nigerians which covers ‘only the most basic moral principles’, or beliefs, that manage their mutual expectations, thus enabling them to live in peace.

In essence, the Nigerian ideology, from this perspective, is about freedom of religion, political association, economic pursuits and ownership of property; and the role of government in this regard is simply to provide infrastructure, while the productive sector is the exclusive preserve of private investors. Riddled with the shortcomings of ‘the issues of full employment and income distributions,’³ the temporal character and characteristics of the Nigerian ideology is also the general contention of Hazihi. The problematic, as treated in the book by the late leader of JASLDAWAJ, Muhammad Yusuf, is a complex web of justifications, based on the sovereignty of Allah, that the Islamic ideology, that is spiritual in its outlook, is sacrosanct and must be embraced by all Muslims.

In contradistinction, Gouldnerian Sociology, may have seen both ideological schemes, Nigerian and Islamic, as portrayed by Yusuf, as the falsification of reality to lead the masses into unprecedented chaos. Gouldner believes that such perspective develops when ‘rationale discourse’ collapses and one party to a dispute disappears into oblivion while the other is tolerated. This occurs ‘when interests stifle discourse.’ Rationale discourse, argues Gouldner, is truncated, when it questions the ‘interests’, which are many, of the ideologues. Ideology, then becomes a ‘fraudulent discourse’ and ‘counterfeit rationality’ to rational discourse. Subsequently, rationality fails and the ‘forces’ that instituted the rise of the ideology become shrouded in secrecy. (Gouldner 1973: 115-123)

While Gouldner projects this critical Western view of ideology, Ibn Taimiyyah⁴ sees the development of an Islamic ideology as normal. According to him, there are two types of ideologies-*aqeedah*: “required *aqeedah*” (p.32) and “corrupted *aqeedah*.” (p.33) The *Salaf* are the

1 Hazihi Aqidatuna Wa Man Haju Da’awatuna was written and published twice in 2009 by Muhammad Yusuf, late leader of the Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da’awati Wal Jihad.

2 See Nisbet’s *The Sociological Tradition* (1993) and Durkheim’s *Pickering*, W.S.F. (1984) *Durkheim’s Sociology of Religion*

3 See Malami (2018) *Shehu Malami: A Prince of the Caliphate*. Safari Books Limited. Ibadan

4 Ibn Taimiyyah’s perspective in this respect is captured in Al-Uthaymeen’s *Explanation of a summary of al-Aqidatul Hamawiyyah of Ibn Taimiyyah*. (no date of publication no publisher)

repositories of “required aqeedah” [aqeedah of all the Salafus-Salih] (p.32) while the Khalaf exhibit “corrupted aqeedah.” He explains that the saying put forward by the Khalaf that: “Tareeqatus Salaf aslam, wa tareeqatus Khalaf a’lam wa ahkam!” (the way of the Salaf is safe, yet the way of the Khalaf is more knowledgeable and wiser), with which they justify their claim is a ‘false principle’

The outcome of the debate on al-Aqeedatul Hamawiyyah, from which the explanation above is derived, is a far-reaching consensus among the Ulama that it is a credible Salafi worldview. Imam Al-Haafidh al-Dhahabee, for example, noted that at the conclusion of the discussion of the al-Aqeedatul Hamawiyyah, “then there was agreement that this was a good Salafi creed.” (p.179)

Dr Abdallah Azzam takes this a notch further beyond the realm of theory. Like Marx, who wrote that “human civilization”⁵ resembles that ‘hideous pagan idol who will not drink the nectar but from the skull of the slain,’⁶ Azzam, states that: “History does not write its lines except with blood. Glory does not build its lofty edifice except with skulls. Honor and respect cannot be established except on a foundation of cripples and corpses... Indeed, those who think they can change reality, or change societies, without blood sacrifices and wounds, without pure, innocent souls, do not understand the essence of our religion.”⁷

The essence of Islam, against the backdrop of explaining Allah and the obligation mankind must muster to obey Him, is the basis of the arguments brought forward in Hazihi. The book is about how Muslims must be mobilized to heed the call of Allah, obey His commandments and shun any temptation to ascribe partner(s) to Him. It goes further to outline what should be done to fulfil this onerous task of tackling “issues with explanations and the use of guns,”⁸ when necessary.

Upon this praxis, JASLDAWAJ, as a movement was born. Within the span of nine years it became the ‘deadliest terrorist group’ in the world four years ago, killing as much as 6,644 people in 2014, dwarfing Iraq and its parent body ISIS to a second place (GTI 2015:14)⁹. The net effect of its violent actions culminated in a ‘humanitarian catastrophe’ at the conflict zone in June 2016, as captured by Amnesty International at the beginning of this year.¹⁰ Currently, there may be over two million people who survived the iniquities of the movement but have fallen into a new trap of rape, starvation and detention by the Nigerian soldiers. (Amnesty International 2018)¹¹ Up to 31st May, this year, the group has killed at least 358 people in different attacks within Nigeria and other neighboring countries (Wikipedia).¹² From that period to date, a highly placed foreign military source has estimated that about 500 Nigerian soldiers have disappeared

5 See Marx (1853) ‘The Future of British Rule in India.’ <https://marxists.catbull.com>

6 Ibid

7 Azzam is cited in McGregor, Andrew (2003) “Jihad and Rifle Alone”: Abdallah Azzam and the Islamist Revolution.” <https://journals.lib.unb.ca>

8 Listen to Hazihi audiotope (2009)

9 See ‘Global Terrorism Index 2015’. Institute for Economics and Peace

10 See ‘They Betrayed Us’: Women Who Survived Boko Haram Raped, Starved and Detained in Nigeria. (Amnesty International Report 2018)

11 Ibid

12 <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>

after attacks on military bases by members of the movement.¹³ Scores of civilians have also been killed by the insurgents in different attacks during this period. So, it could be that about 1,000 people may have lost their lives as a result of the activities of the group in the last ten months alone. Much of these, or all of it, is as a result of the infamous influence of Hazihi.

Methodology and summary of Hazihi

Two methodologies have been adopted for this paper: 1) content analysis of Hazihi and 2) personal interviews with some actors of JASLDAWAJ. Both compliments each other to a great extent because there are areas in which the book is not explicit but the interview elucidates what is being sought. The analysis is essentially derived from an audio rendition of the book, as summarized below, by its author.

The book, written in Arabic, was published twice within a fortnight in 2009.¹⁴ With a total of 179 pages, its major purpose was to set forth the ideology of the sect and its methods of proselytizing. It was also to clear the air about misconceptions (on the leanings and convictions of its leader and his followers), who were seen as Kharijites, Shiites and Qur'aniyya Muslims, mainly by the Izala Muslims.

After copiously explaining what he stands for, his method of da'awah (the ultimate goal of da'awah) and the categorization of Tauhid, Yusuf, while dismissing labels attached to him and the JASLDAWAJ, wrote that da'awah is compulsory upon each and every Muslim, just as prayers must be directed at Allah alone.

He rejected the notion of intercessors and intercessory agencies in seeking Allah, arguing that this is idolatry (shirk) in all ramifications and forms, including the practice of democracy, pursuit of Western education and working in any government establishment.

Referring to the works of Plato and other Western philosophers, he castigated Western education in particular, saying it is harmful to Islam and Muslims. He debunked Darwinism, Marxism, geography and other topics in social science subjects. He also didn't spare the mode of dressing of students of Western education- saying it is against the Islamic mode.

According to him, the soldiers and the police are the elements of coercion by which democratic rule thrives in Nigeria, thereby completing the perpetuation of idol worship, since the dictates of democracy, particularly those of the constitution, rival those set out by the Holy Qur'an.

He took on the Shia and Sufi sects condemning the idea of the Twelve Imamate and rejecting all Sufi doctrines and practices. He insisted that Sharia has no alternative as it is complete and requires no addition. To him, anything included in it is an aberration.

He claimed that he drew inspiration for writing the book from the writings of Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Abdul-Wahab, Sheikh Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Saalih Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Uthaymeen

¹³ This is a personal communication with a highly placed, United States defense expert in Nigeria in September 2018

¹⁴ What follows up to the end of this part on the methodology section is derived from Bello (2015) 'The Bayajidda Project 2015: 21' (Unpublished)

at-Tamimi (1925-2001), Rashid Rida, Sheikh Muhammad Nasirudeen Al-Bani (1914-1999) and others.

The book has “chapters on Tauhid, proselytization, democracy, Western education, lawfulness of working in government establishments, Shiism, Sufism, Shariah and commentaries on the purpose of establishing the movement.” (Hazihi: 2009)

Why the Ideology Developed and Subsists: Theoretical Underpinnings

For the purpose of this paper, there are about three differing views as to why the ideology of Jihad and da’awah has developed over the years. The first one is a generic theory, the second, with Western origin and background, is hinged on the evolution of a world order, while the third, a synthesis of the Western and Islamic perspectives, is the *Weltanschauung* theory.¹⁵

According to Ahmad¹⁶, the attractions for such da’awah, are: ignorance of Sunnah (the traditions of Prophet Muhammad) in particular and Islam in general, corrupted aqeedah and misinformed discourses between groups and movements as well as the exercise of unjust and iniquitous authority under systems of government alien to Islam. Late Jafar Mahmoud Adam, regarded by some as the mentor of Yusuf, believed his protégé was ‘acting on evil counsel’¹⁷ when he floated the idea, which he explains was influenced by Christians and ‘bad’ Muslims with faltering fear of Allah.^{18 19}

Islamic terrorism, writes Brzezinski (2004), that has its roots in religious anger, is one of the most thriving and difficult to overcome. “...Derived from shared ethnicity backed by historic myths fired by religious zeal,” it has “proven the most resistant of all to physical suppression. According to him, the terrorists are incorrigible, secluded and pathologically self-righteous persons who employ and justify violence easily. (Brzezinski 2004: 29), This perspective is not completely off the mark because it may seem that JASLDAWAJ members have over the years been motivated to commit violence by their perception of and reality of torture, abandonment and abuse by the state. They have often been persuaded and indoctrinated by sermons circulated via instruments of popular media- audio cassettes and VCDs of fatwas of inciting ministrations. However, it is narrow in its understanding of the issue and mostly ridicule the movement, thus making it difficult to initiate a dialogue with them or broker peace in the final analysis. Michael Hayden, former CIA director, while talking about ISIS, puts it in an interview with the BBC that:

15 See: Abdelkadir, Deina (2003) Social Justice in Islam

16 Ahmad (no date) Apparent Takfir: History, Dangers, Causes and Dangers. (no publisher)

17 Jafar in an audio tape circa 2005-2006

18 Ibid

19 On the day Sheikh Jafar delivered this lecture at Indimi mosque in Maiduguri, the entire area was overwhelmed by JASLDAWAJ adherents, who swore to kill him. As the lecture progressed and became intensive, they allegedly charged into the mosque, not content with waiting for him to finish before attacking. Those close to him had to switch off the electricity of the place where he was seated. Subsequently, he was smuggled out of the mosque. This was one of the reasons why the movement was fingered when he was later murdered. Indeed, when Yusuf came to Kano after his death to condole his family, he was chased away.

the West can control and finish the group, yet it has no solution to it, especially, its strong link to Islamic monotheism.

In his book: 'World Order', Kissinger reduces the problematic, which he dubbed: Islamism, to a thematic war for global order. Skeptical of its arrival 'at a settled concept of international order,' after a protracted struggle characterized by empire building, feuds and sectarian conflicts, Kissinger (2014) posits that 'Islamism' will be polarized between identifying with 'the world community' or resisting it.

Viewing 'Islamism' from a reductionist kaleidoscope of nationalism and its evolution in Middle East and North Africa, Kissinger wanted to simply project a picture of some sort of power struggle involving a Shahanshah (King of Kings), who is bent on imposing himself on lesser mortals. To him, Islam was more of a religion of conquest in which the 'Dar al-Islam' is in perpetual conflict with the 'Dar al Harb,' through a strategy of Jihad, which he defines as: 'an obligation binding on believers to expand their faith through struggle.' (Kissinger 2014: 102) The culmination of this strategy in the rise and fall of the Ottoman empire, which Kissinger sees as 'the sick man of Europe,' whose weakness became its albatross, led, correctly, to the establishment of revolutionary vanguards- Ikhwanul Muslim, Jabhat al-Nusrah, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Boko Haram etc, that sought to resuscitate the 'ailing man,' whose kin, Kemal Ataturk had castigated as a 'putrefied corpse.'²⁰ It would seem, here, that there is a significant departure from the one-dimensional perspective of Western scholars on what constitutes 'Islamism' and the existential epistemes of Muslims, who crave for social justice and not 'total war.'²¹

Whereas Kissinger and his likes view Islam and 'Islamism' as a bloodcurdling enterprise bent on making universal gains through bloodshed, the modern-day progenitors of Jihad simply reacted to what they perceive as injustices by Europe and Ataturk. Hassan al-Banna (1906- 1949), the founder of Ikhwan proclaimed the thrust of his message as 'mercy and justice' arising from the understanding of Islam as 'a comprehensive system which deals with all spheres of life.'²² For Qutb, who saw a 'corrupt' America, Islam must "offer... faith and a way of life which on the one hand conserves the benefits of modern science and technology, and on the other, fulfills the basic human needs on the same level of excellence as technology has fulfilled them in the sphere of material comfort."²³ These views, contrary to those of Brzezinski, Kissinger and other Realists, properly represent the reasons why Islamic revivalism became the vogue on world stage.

Having said this, the ultimate goal of Islamic revival is not some limited ecumenical pursuits, but a quest for 'Islamic social justice,' or maqasid al-Shari'ah, which as the 'end goals of Islamic law ... represent the political, social and economic ethos of Islamic jurisprudence.' (Abdelkader

20 See Armstrong, Karen (2017) 'The Myth of Religious Violence' (<https://www.theguardian.com>)

21 See Kissinger (2014) 'World Order'. Penguin. London

22 See: Hasan, A. (2006) Six Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna: A Selection from Majmu'at Rasa'il al-Shahid Hasan Al-Banna. International Islamic Federation of Students Organization. Kuwait.

23 See Qutb (1978:14) 'Nahwa Mujtama' Islami' (Towards an Islamic Society) Dar al-Shuruq. Cairo

2010: 26) According to Qutb, Sharia'ah equates justice and equality for all. It is not, first and foremost about war, but about human rights. "Every person is entitled to food, drink, clothes, transportation, housing, marriage, because those are necessities that preserve and provide the basics of life. Likewise, every person is entitled to medical care and treatment and to education, to work and to be trained."²⁴ All these are only possible when a ruler acts on the principle of masalih al mursalah or maqasid.

In explaining the causes of 'extremism,' away from the reductionist view that resonates in the West, Al-Qardawi (1981)²⁵, insists that these goes beyond the Durkhemian and psychological reasons advanced by sociologists. It entails 'religious, psychological, ideological, or all of the above.' (Al-Qardawi 1981), ²⁶His focus is generally on the injustices- corruption, tyranny, poverty, indecent acts, arrest and torture of those who dare to resist all of the above. This is also the views of al-Turabi²⁷, al-Hudaybi²⁸ and Jama'a al-Islamiyah (1992).²⁹

Having conceived of this idea from the Islamic perspective, what kind of theoretical design is desirable for the establishment of a political model? How will the attainment of the model be determined? Are the issues clear to warrant the evolution of enlightenment procedures? What kind of channels of communications and contacts should be developed? Are there Islamic alternatives to banks, Western education and cultural artifacts and values, such as films; and technology? Can the emerging movement build a rapid response mechanism that will provide relief and succor to the Muslim community? Can it reflect the spiritual values of Islam? Can it develop an appropriate language and rhetoric for the ideologues? All these are the issues that are epistemologically, (considering his references to Usul ul-Fiqh), addressed in Hazihi.

The purpose of writing the book, Yusuf wrote, is to "rekindle a new circle of discourses and debates that have relapsed for some time," so that the movement will "come into reckoning" through the debates of contradictions. This, he professed "would spur antagonism against that community which aspires to soar." Reflecting on the survival mode of the animals, he compared it with how human beings seeking justice, equity and fair play must proceed:

It is often said that the rise of civilizations is akin to the growth of a lion, although it is not all of us that are familiar with the lifecycle of a lion. Many of us know that of a domestic cat better. When cats start growing they become active. That is why Allah destines that they are born in a colony of five to six or more. The multitude are always, under the guise of play, engaged in hyperactive activities- running around, wrestling

24 Ibid

25 See al-Qardawi, Yusuf (1981) Al-Sahwah al-Islamiyah Bayan al-Juhud wa Tattarruf (The Islamic Awakening: Between Rejection and Extremism) Dar al Ummah. Qatar

26 Ibid

27 Turabi, Hassan (1980) Tajdid Usul al Fiqh al Islami (Renewing Islamic Fiqh) Dar al Jil. Beirut.

28 Al Hudaybi, Hasan (1978) Dusturuna (Our Constitution?) Dar al Ansar. Cairo

29 See: Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (no date) Al Muwajah Hatmiyah (Confrontation is Inevitable). Cairo

each other and such like. This is how the life of mankind in a community is. You often have to strive repeatedly and consistently before a victor will emerge. (Hazihi: 2009)

Precursor: From Ibn Taimiyyah to Osama.

The existential experience of Ibn Taimiyyah during the Mongol invasion led by Genghis Khan contributed in no small measure to his development into a Weberian 'man of action' theorist, whose writings has influenced a large spectrum of Muslims. Despite the large followership he enjoys, which has sent a contingent of 'armies of God' across the entire globe on a mission to kill in the name of Allah, his postulations and ideologies have come under severe criticism by many Islamic scholars. One of such, Sheikh Abdul-Jabbar Nasiru Kabara, is here in Kano. He has written extensively in *Uqud-ud-Duriyyah Fi Manaqib*³⁰ on Ibn Taimiyyah and questioned many of his methodologies and ideologies. However, despite the barrage of attacks he has suffered, Ibn Taimiyyah's views and ideas have remained unkillable. They continue to shape the thoughts and actions of many Islamic movements in many places in the world today, including Nigeria.³¹

Talking about the Tartar invaders, Ibn Taimiyyah wrote that they became infamous for abduction of children and attacking Muslims. They also denigrated Islam by subjugating Muslims and defiling mosques, especially, Jerusalem mosque, where they committed many atrocities. They robbed Muslims of their possession and plundered treasuries. They also took as prisoners of war, Muslim men, who they forced away from their homes. They later claimed they have converted to Islam and decreed that Muslims shouldn't fight then, while Genghis Khan had instructed them to annihilate anyone who utters Allahu Akbar.

"Praise be to Allah. Any community of people which jettisons the Sharia, as a law spiritually given, as revealed in many authentic traditions, such community, either Tartar or others, must be fought to a standstill until they submit totally to the Sharia, whether or not they had professed the Shahada (testimony of submission, which authenticates one's claim to Islam) and practice portions of Islam thereof."³²

The act of fighting the unbelievers, he noted, was akin to the actions Caliph Abubakar and other companions of Prophet Muhammad took when they confronted those who refused to pay Zakkat, after the ensuing discourses on the matter that ensued between Caliph Abubakar and Umar, his successor, mediated by a broad spectrum of scholars of Islamic jurisprudence.

³⁰ Uqud is available on audio tapes

³¹ A septuagenarian who is a student of Ibn Taimiyyah told me a story as I was writing this paper. He had a junior brother who passed on recently. The brother had lived his life in another state. So, after his death, the issue of sharing his legacy among his five children came up; and his senior was called upon to administer the estate as is appropriate. When the senior brother got there, he told the first born to his face that he is not a party to the sharing because he has converted to Christianity and married a Christian. He even told him, that if anything, what he deserves is to be beheaded, since he is an unbeliever. When others at the meeting asked the old man whether he would have passed the same verdict on his first son under a similar circumstance, he didn't mince words in affirming his resolve.

The incident has since split the two families.

³² Ibid- Majmu'ul Fatwa

According to Abubakar, even if it is the rope with which they held their camels that they refuse to give as Zakkat, I will fight them. On his part, Umar contested this decision arguing why must you do that when they have professed Islam and are praying.

Umar cited a tradition of the Prophet, in which the Prophet told him that: 'Umar I have been instructed to fight the people until they accept that there is no god but Allah and I am his messenger. Once they do so, they have sanctified their dignity and property. What is left is for them to be steadfast in adhering to their given testimony.

Furthermore, the Prophet, may He be blessed, in about ten perspectives captured in the Hadith on Khawarij, whose he describes as the most malicious of creatures, said although their prayer will make you envious and their fasting is more rigorous but that does not make them true believers.

So, from the foregoing, argues Ibn Taimiyyah, mere acceptance of Islam without strict adherence to Sharia vitiates one's faith. "For instance, Caliph Ali fought the Khawarij despite the fact that they prayed and had testified that there is no deity except Allah and Muhammad is His messenger. War against any one is compulsory except where Allah's decrees are obeyed and there are no vestiges of polytheism. Whenever it obvious that Allah is not being obeyed by a person, killing that person is a MUST."³³

"Any group of people who refuses to observe the obligatory prayers, refuses to fast, perform Hajj or avoid the unlawful in terms of lives, property, indulges in alcohol consumption, fornication, games of chance, contracting of marriages between those forbidden, avoidance of Jihad, refusal to impose tax on Christians and others similar to the foregoing, which Islam has declared as unlawful, risks becoming apostates. And, any ensemble that fails to observe all the above, although it agrees with the legislations but doesn't practice it, incurs the ire of the Muslims and must be fought. On this, I do not know of any conflict of perspective among Islamic scholars," concludes Ibn Taimiyyah.³⁴

In fact, the most glaring of this cathartic influence of Ibn Taimiyyah was the rise of Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, which devastating effect of 9/11 still affect geo-strategic and international relations. This also shaped the trajectory of Yusuf's career as a proselytizer. As noted in Khad' al-Waram Min al-Khawarij. (At-Tamimi 2018), Yusuf cut his teeth in this business after he listened to the sermons and fatwas of Osama. One of such fatwas was delivered in 1990. He stated that: "the infidels won't stop until we raise the banner of jihad. The infidels won't refrain from their killings without jihad. Justice won't be realized without jihad."^{35 36}

Al-Qaeda and the Advancement of the JASLDAWAJ Ideology³⁷

33 Majmu'ul Fatwa. Volume. 28

34 See Majmu'ul Fatwa. Volume. 28:12

35 See: Video of 'Meeting Osama Ibn Laden.' World Story Special. Stratford Foundation.

36 Osama's scathing open letter to Saudi monarch, in the video above, reproduced below, may also have served as inspiration to Yusuf when he declared war against the Nigerian state in 2009. The letter reads: "O King! It is unconscionable to let the country become an American colony, with American soldiers, with their filthy feet, roaming everywhere. Those filthy, infidel crusaders must not be allowed to remain in our holy land."

37 On January 25, 2015, Abdel-Bari Atwan told BBC Dateline that JASLDAWAJ has affiliation with ISIS and al-Qaeda. According to him, much of the weapons of the movement, back then, came from Libya.

Not many knew that prior to July 2009, JASLDAWAJ had formal connection with Al-Qaeda. At the pre-Jihad period of the movement's growth, some adherents undertook a tour of training to Algeria about three times.

These increased after the three-day war in Maiduguri and the extra-judicial killing of Yusuf. At that time, Shekau, his deputy who was nursing a wound and many of the surviving adherents fled via Niger Republic and Katsina state to Kano city. From here, many were ferried to Somalia and Algeria where they received military trainings from AQIM battle-hardened combatants.

It was in Algeria that Shekau's current praetorian guards got their fighting skills, who I refer to as Algeria-9. Their special competence includes firing Machine Guns, their favorite weapons, and AK-47s simultaneously. They have the capacity to take on 40 troops not well armed. Alternately trained in the rocky, sandy and riverine terrains of Algeria, they are amphibious fighters who have been exposed to the combat techniques, tactics and strategy of varying countries across the world. Their instructors were tough Chechen insurgency veterans.

They cut their teeth in shielding Shekau when his Kano Road, Damaturu residence came under attack by troops. They overwhelmed the soldiers, surrounded their boss and safely took him away. Later at Sambisa, their gun duel skills were honed and sharpened to a frightening level. "Those boys are really deadly. I have never seen dangerous fighters like them. They are the mainstay of Shekau's power and they are very lethal," reveals a former JASLDAWAJ adherent.³⁸

AQIM also facilitated JASLDAWAJ purchase of materiel worth about N3 billion from Libya between 2013 and 2014. Much of the fund for the transactions came from bank robberies, looting of villages and 'donations' by Kanuri politicians and businessmen in Borno and Yobe states. "They do this for their own selfish reasons," Abu Osama also reveal.³⁹

Perhaps, it was as a result of Yusuf and JASLDAWAJ association with Ibn Taimiyyah and Osama that both were dubbed Kharijites.

Origin of Kharijites⁴⁰

The Khawarij were originally followers of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the fourth rightly guided Caliph of Islam. Before they rebelled against him, they were not known by that name. At a point in time they split into groups. One group, impressed by the encomiums showered on him by Prophet Muhammad, felt so endeared to him and regarded him as god, expressing their resolve that he should be worshipped. Their belief was that the prophet had never mentioned any living soul with such distinctions. Indeed, they concocted Hadiths with such superlative narratives about him and put in public domain, in their bid to justify their deification of him.

38 Personal communications with Abu Osama, an ex-member of JASLDAWAJ, August 2018.

39 Personal communications with Abu Osama, an ex-member of JASLDAWAJ, August 2018.

40 This entire section is based on the Hadiths in Sanulul Nasa'i and Masnadul Barza of Abu Dawud

Dissatisfied with this self-seeking decision, Ali gathered them and admonished that they should rescind their decision as it is not Islamically and morally right. He insisted that there is no god except Allah, but they refused to listen to him. So, he called another meeting and asked that whoever believes that he is god should identify himself. Many of them did and he sentenced them all to death.

A ditch was dug and in it was a large bonfire. They refused to budge as Kambar, a stout and very powerful aide of Ali, threw them one after the other into the roaring fire. Instead of refuting their initial stand, they swore, as they were about to be condemned to death that: “there is no god but Ali.” As one of them repeats this testimony before being burnt, the remaining reaffirms his testimony in unison while waiting for their turn. Their conviction was that no one tortures with fire except Allah.

Frustrated by this brazen display of disbelief, Ali composed a poem to record the incident:

When I discovered that the situation was so bad,
I lit my fire,
And called Kambar to assist me in burning them.

Later, some of those with this belief, who survived relocated from Iraq to Southern part of what is today Saudi Arabia, were mobilized by a Jew, Abdullahi Ibn Sabah. Some of them settled in Syria, Oman, Khyber and Medina. However, Ali’s joy that this unsavory rebellion has been quashed was short-lived as the other group, who were to become the Khawarij, suddenly sprang up.

The fresh rebellion was ignited by the conflict between Mu’awiyya and Ali. Both antagonists agreed to settle the dispute between

them but mutual animosity prevented them from confronting each other for resolution. So, it was decided that representatives of each should sit with each other. Ali sent Abu Musa al-Ashari while Mu’awiyya delegated Amr Ibn As.

As this decision was being taken Ali’s adherents questioned his wisdom of delegating authority to al-Ashari. They reasoned that since authority belongs to Allah alone, it should not be delegated to any mere mortal. By this declaration, they decreed that Ali has disobeyed Allah. Subsequently, about 6000 of them took leave of Ali’s camp and occupied a house in Kufa.

They stopped attending congregation prayer and they stopped associating with anybody. Worried by this development, Ali sent an emissary, Abdullahi Ibn Abbas, to them with a clear instruction that he should engage them on their desiderata of premising every issue on its spiritual currency of being captured in the Qur’an.

When Abbas approached the compound and uttered “peace be unto you.” They simply answered: “welcome Ibn Abbas.” They didn’t reply him in the conventional way because they believed he is an unbeliever too. He neglected their indignity and sat in their midst.

He asked what their contention with Ali was and they listed three issues, primary among which was that Ali has delegated Allah's authority to man. He then asked whether they remember a verse in the Qur'an that stated: "Wa in khiftum shikaka bainihima, saba'athu hakaman min ahlihi wa hakaman min ahliha. In yurida Islam yuwafikillaha bainahuma."⁴¹ They acquiesced. And he pointed out that Allah has clearly delegated authority to man and drawing from this Ali has not disobeyed Allah.

He advanced more spiritual legislations to defend Ali's actions thus convincing 2,000 of the rebels to drop their belligerent stand. The remaining 4,000 stood their ground, insisting that Ali, Mu'awiyya, Ibn As, Ibn al-Ashari and others were all labeled unbelievers. Following this, they sent their soldiers to kill them. As a result, Ali was murdered and Mu'awiyya was fatally wounded on his testis, rendering him impotent till his death.

This narrative was the foundation of Takfirism in Islam that subsists till date. The ideology spread beyond that era, becoming Ibadiyyah during the time of Imam Malik. Nonetheless, it was not fully accepted in today's Saudi Arabia. But it became successful in Oman. Later, it found its way to Tanzania and Algeria, becoming potent in the latter. In the 1950s, professionals in Egypt came together under the guise of fighting injustice to oppose Gamal Abdul-Naser. They became known as Ikhwanul Muslim (Brotherhood of Islam).

Their premature move to overthrow Abdul-Naser infuriated him. What followed was a martial order against all its members. They were haunted and extra-judicially killed on a massive scale wherever they could be found in Egypt. This made many of the members to flee Egypt. Many settled in Northern Nigeria, Sudan and other parts of poor Africa in the 70s and 80s where their ideology spread like wildfire, especially the writings, of Sayyid Qutb, which contains Takfir ideology, was also killed by the Egyptian authorities.

Away from this historic conception of Khawarijism, the reality of the experiences of Islam in the 20th century, specifically the clash of the Ottoman empire with Western civilization, revolutionized Muslims' responses to the invasion and denigration of Islam. For instance, the rise of Islamic Brotherhood, led by Hassan Al-Banna, in the 1920s was partly to checkmate Ataturk's condemnation of Islam as a 'putrefied corpse.' But, many scholars and students of Salafi Ilm still see the Brotherhood as a Khawarij entity. This rhetorical rivalry has permeated inter and intra sects understanding of each other, giving rise to Muslims pelting themselves with Takfirism and justifying their claims with ideological claims from the Qur'an and Hadith

Ideological Split: Pre Hazihi Khawarij- Post Hazihi Khawarij

Prior to the publication of Hazihi, the levelling of Khawarij label against the group came from the Izala group, led by late Sheikhs Jafar Mahmoud Adam and Muhammad Auwal Adam Albani, and other Islamic sect who strongly criticized Yusuf's stand against Western education and condemnation of those working for the government of dagut. It was these barrage of rejection, of

41 See Qur'an 4:35- "And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it among them. Indeed, Allah is ever knowing and Acquainted [with all things]." Although this verse is talking about disagreement between a husband and his wife, the reference in this context is to highlight how Allah delegates his authority to man. It is thus a repudiation of the rigid interpretation of 'inil hukmu illallah' - there is no authority, except that of Allah.

what became known as Yusufiyya (a sort reductionist caption coined to portray the ideological drive as solely the creation of Yusuf which has nothing to do with Islam), which propelled him to write Hazihi. Hazihi, as it were, became the climax of series of debates, formal and informal, that were held between Yusuf and Izala leaders in several places within Nigeria and abroad, in Saudi Arabia. While the Izala group claimed that Yusuf pledged to renounce his 'faith' in the unlawfulness of Western education, Yusuf insisted that he never did so. The icing of the cake on this matter were the repeated threats of exposure of Yusuf by the Izala scholars, which never materialized and the persistence of Yusuf that he never had any deal with any of them.

These scathing criticisms of being a Khawarij were also conversely, the hallmark of the ideological wrangling that tore the group apart after Yusuf's death. Influenced by government, some non-Kanuri elements within the movement, who saw it as becoming tribalistic, from the way Shekau was running it, Shekau's overbearing attitude, which became obvious in the way he compelled the adherents to call him "the greatest Imam" and his showing of "signs of deviation and extremism," reported to the ISIS, caused it to drop him as the Amir of the movement (Zenn 2018). The first breakaway group was the Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladul Sudan in 2012. Four years later, ISIS weighed in, a situation which developed into a gully rift in 2017. Since then, the schism has assumed a worrisome proportion that has threatened the existence of the group.

All these are not different from that which existed between ISIS and al-Qaeda rank and file. While the latter praised Morsi for his ability to transform the victory of Arab Spring to Islamic triumph via the institution of democracy, the former, also derogatorily regarded by al-Qaeda as Khawarij, simply debunked him and the Muslim Brotherhood as kufr. This split has rubbed, as we have seen, on the Jihadi groups in Nigeria, where the al-Barnawi group describes Shekau as a 'malignant tumor' that must be excised; and Shekau sees them as 'suspect.' (Zenn 2018)

What ISWAP found detesting about Shekau is his excessive takfirism subsumed under the basic ideas that are criticized in Khad' al-Waram Min al-Khawarij... (At-Tamimi 2018) These are: Shekau's views of takfir (declaring someone to be a disbeliever/kafir). According to Al-Barnawi and Al-Barnawi (2018), Shekau transgressed due limits by unilaterally promoting the idea that takfir can be heaped on anyone living in the abode of kufr (disbelief). They explained that Shekau has displayed his belief in the concept of 'chain takfir,' which dynamics conforms to the following reasoning:

- That it is obligatory for a Muslim to declare idolaters as Kufr. Failure to do so, in his perception, renders a Muslim makes their madhhab to be invalid or brings to doubt their belief.
- In the event of this, a chain of 'nullifier of Islam' ensues. The first 'nullifier', regarded as A is doubted by another, B, who is in turn doubted by C.

At-Tamimi (2018 a) indicates that this development has a snowball effect 'potentially *ad infinitum*,' and is not condoned by the Islamic State.

On his part, Shekau, who believes, as he draws inspiration from the Mamluks, Abbasids and Umayyads, in the "permissibility of the multiplicity of imams" (jawaz ta'addud al-a'ima), (At-Tamimi 2018 b) sees his group as the sole driver of jihad in the whole of West Africa. This could

be a subtle repudiation of the legitimacy of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Islamic state project, to which he had earlier paid allegiance in 2015.

Shekau's treatise, a rehash of Hazihi, in its treatment and explanations of the need to reject and rebel against Dagut, consider democracy as a peril against Islam and jettison Western education, is a subtle reminder to his comrades that compromising or softening of their Islamic ideological position is a Kufr. Making allusion to a correspondence sent to the leaders of the movement before the Maiduguri uprising of 200, which outlawed da'awah, Shekau (2018) wrote, in reply to Khad' al-Waram Min al-Khawarij..., that: "And this was written to us by the one who claims that he is a Muslim." The point is that the al-Barnawi group may have simply conspired with the detractors of Islam to fight against the Deen.

His verdict is:

Therefore, I say on the basis of what God and His Messenger said that all of those who die on this regime and is a disbeliever will abide in the hellfire forever, whether he wishes or not. And the evidence is the words of the Almighty: "God does not forgive associating partners with Him and He forgives the one He wills for what is besides that. And the one who associates partners with God has gone far astray" (4/116). And He made clear that the one who associates partners with God, Paradise is denied to him and his abode is the hellfire as He said: "The one who associates partners with God, Paradise is denied to him, and his abode is the hellfire" (5/72). (Hazihi: 2009)

Citing Ibn Fodio extensively, Shekau (2018) reminds his brethren, 'the 'ulama and students and general populace' that it is obligatory to wage jihad against polytheists who have conspired to contravene the laws of Islam in which "shirk is not considered." He emphasizes that even Allah has decreed that, on the Muslims who are 'loyal to those who have disbelieved,' and those 'who live among the disbelievers and apostates who cannot be distinguished [from them] in the time of war'... 'jihad is preferable over every jihad.' In the same breath, their wealth is considered booty and they are declared as apostates. The caveat, hinged on the condemnation of Jews 'hateful Americans', secularists, hypocrites and apostates, who contrived the schism between Muslims, is that: "Had they, (the Muslims) believed in God, the Prophet and what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them for allies, but many of them are gravely immoral." ⁴²

The ambivalence of Zenn (2018) that the group, as monolithic entity, has both the capacity to recreate itself and also engage in what may seem to be an intractable division, points to the fact that the Al-Barnawi and Shekau groups are likely to have a dialogue in the future that would lead to their re-uniting. This is because the federal government, which Zenn calls on 'to play... the factions against each other to weaken them both' has committed a very serious blunder by giving huge sums of money to the Al-Barnawi group- a fusion of two Yusuf sons and the intellectually

42 See: Qur'an 5/80-1.

sound and prolific Mamman Nur, who was killed in August.⁴³ This federal government largesse, provided under the guise of negotiating the freedom of some girls abducted, have empowered the al-Barnawi group, which has also been getting more training and weapons, while the Shekau group has been resting and re-grouping, ready for a showdown. The two groups are still holding dialogue on different levels. “The problem is that they both share a common creed and mutual suspicion of the government and its security agencies,” notes a former member, who was also in Ansaru before he quit. Although gales of defection and desertions have seriously affected the ranks and file of the movement, its ability to mobilize and re-invent itself in more volatile and perilous way is a prospect that is so scary. Even if unity of the groups is not achieved in the short term, Shekau’s group alone may be priming to make a point that they are still around by staging attacks before the 2019 elections. Their goal is simply to discredit, ridicule and bring down the government. The opposition of government and everything it stands for is part of the messages of Hazihi, which both group do not dispute in principle.

Hazihi: Methods and Techniques of Da’awah and Faith

But did Yusuf and his adherents see themselves as Kharijites? No. they never did. They still don’t. Yusuf, in a BBC Hausa interview with Bilkisu Babangida at the movement’s enclave denied his or the group, being Kharijites. “Kharijites,” he said, quoting Imam Shahrastani, “are those who rebelled against the authorities of the rightly guided Caliphs. I am not a Kharijite. But if anyone says I am one, then time and Allah will reveal who is one between himself and I.”

⁴⁴Beyond this explanation, Yusuf had to write Hazihi. According to him:

“Of all things that are obligatory, explaining the religion of Allah is foremost. This whole world exists as a result of the epistemology of Allah. Writing and explanation are the fulcrum upon which the whole world rests. If a terrorist is engaged in the dual exercise of writing and explaining what he does, he would verily control the affairs of the universe. If the righteous shirk these noble undertakings, all his strivings will come to naught. For instance, if you were to restrict the circulation of all pro-establishment newspapers in Nigeria for one month, there would be a rebellion. But the consistent propaganda by these newspapers is what has kept rebellion at bay.” (Hazihi: 2009)

The main purpose of writing the book, he stated “is to quench the thirst of he who seeks genuine justice and avoid he who pursue the whispers of his heart.”

Another reason he gave for writing the book was that:

⁴³ Barely a month later, a commander, known to be loyal to Shekau, Ali Gaga, was killed by his soldiers while he was getting ready to lead 300 of them to surrender.

⁴⁴ This interview was conducted at the Markaz Ibn Taimiyyah, Maiduguri in 2009 few months before Yusuf was killed.

“Now, since different scholars have written so much about Dagut, Western education and working in government employ; and these can be found in many books and treatises, that is why we embarked on the exercise of assembling and compiling these fatwas into a comprehensive whole that will put our position into perspective. “ (Hazihi: 2009)

He also pointed out that:

“If you really want a community to come into reckoning, there should be an element of contradictions that would spur antagonism against that community which aspires to soar. If one is left without challenges and is not propelled to read, he will just become relaxed. If, however, there are epistemological challenges threatening the collective, everyone in the fold will rise to the occasion to defend what he stands for.” (Hazihi: 2009)

This is perhaps similar to what El-Miskin (1989) refers to as ‘an agenda for da’awah ideologues,’ which entails a critique of secularism, expansion of the demographic zone of Islam, consolidating its existing constituency and envisioning challenges as well as plans for the future. Two years before Hazihi debuted, Shekau had led a delegation of JASLDAWAJ to explain the mission of the group to the Ulama in some states of the North. According to him:

“There was a time we visited Bauchi town at the beginning of this da’awah. Muhammad Yusuf was not with us. We also visited Kano, Zaria, Kaduna, Abuja and Jos. We met with many of the Ulama and informed them of our mission. We told them that we have embarked on da’awah, but we will not endorse democracy, we will not participate in Western education and we will not refer our cases to the constitution. We also told them that any we reject any notion of innovation in Islam.” (Shekau 2007)

The Creed

Tauhid and the practice of ascetic Islam

Hazihi, divided Tauhid, into three 'from our understanding.' These are : 1) Tauhidul rughubiyyah,⁴⁵ 2) Tauhidul Uluhiyyah⁴⁶ and 3) Tauhidul asma'i was siffat⁴⁷. It further divided it into two based on the categorizations of other 'Islamic scholars of repute.': a) Tauhidul fil ma'arifati wal istbasi, a combination of Tauhidul rughubiyyah, and Tauhidul asma'i was siffat. b) Tauhidul fil saladi wal khaski.. it then raised a germane question of 'how then do you know Allah?', which it answers. "This is possible by knowing His works, his attributes and his noble names. This is why the scholars merged two of the first three categories earlier outlined," the author wrote.

The prescription of what the founder of the knowledge of Allah should do to 'get closer to Him' is for him to increase his 'acts of worship and pray fervently for His intercession in everything.' That is why we submit to Allah in recognition of His Kuluhiyyah. We totally agree that there is no deity except Him. We also submit to His rughubiyyah- His ability to create, expunge, enrich, nourish, impoverish etc. we also affirm all the beautiful names with which Allah calls Himself and Prophet Muhammad confirms. (Hazihi: 2009)

The sect's position on Allah's rughubiyyah is His exclusive and omni-potent claim to the patent of everything living or dead:

Our position is a very important one. Lack of adherence to it is what has brought lots of divisions in Islam. It is the proliferation of ideologies and philosophies of sects like that of the Mutazilites that has brought lots of misunderstandings into Islam. You should never think that there is anything that is in motion or inertia, visible or hidden, audible or silent; that does not belong to Allah. If you ever believe that somethings in the universe does not belong to Allah, then your belief in Allah, as a Muslim, is questionable. You do not understand Tauhid from the standpoint of what Allah and his prophets explained. You do not belong to the creed of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Until you give possession of everything to Allah, you belief He alone is the inventor and creator of everything, it is then that you believe in the existence of Allah. Afterwards, you can now talk of worshipping Him. (Hazihi: 2009)

In tandem with Allah's exclusive possession of 'everything', the sect strongly believe that **He** alone should be the recipient of all acts of worships, their derivatives, ancillaries, tangibles and

45 Tauhidul rughubiyyah is 'to believe in Allah's omnipotence, [and that], He alone is the originator of creation, maintenance, life and death.' See: www.salafi-dawah.com

46 Tauhidul uluhiyyah is the 'sincerity of devotional acts' such as salat, fasting, zakat, vows and sacrificial animals. See: www.salafi-dawah.com

47 Tauhidul asma'i was siffat 'is to talk of Allah's names and attributes in the same manner He and His prophet (SAW) did.' See: www.salafi-dawah.com

intangibles. So, their comprehension of Allah's uluhiyyah 'as the Salaf outlines it' is that He 'is the one most deserved to be worshipped- in terms seeking for relief, assistance (to accomplish a task or embark on a fresh one), protection, request, spiritual vows, realization of ambition, love, hope, fear, reliance, atonement and adherence to spiritual laws.'

'Other things are those that no one can claim partnership with Allah in them, whether they be those that are close to Him such as Angel Gabriel or messengers, such as Prophets Muhammad and Ibrahim. As Allah testifies: "Your Lord of worship is one. There is none that should be worshipped truthfully except Him, the Beneficent, the Merciful. (Baqarah: 103)" (Hazihi: 2009)

Its proclamation as is oft-repeated, is that its calling is 'premised on Tauhid, praises and piety,' the two of which are 'a reflection of the beauty in the names of Allah and the nobility of His attributes.' This is a confirmation of Allah's signage on His names and attributes as attested to by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It posits that:

We do not slap takfirism on any Muslim until we have proven beyond reasonable doubt to him that his way of life contravenes that of Islam. If you bring anything that is not Sunnah we'd rather die than accept it. (Hazihi: 2009)

Rejection of Technology as Man's Invention

Hazihi advances the belief that technological developments are the creation of Allah and not man. According to Yusuf, "Anyone who thinks or boasts that scientific inventions and technological developments are simply the products of human thinking and not Allah's work belongs to the realm of materialistic philosophers of Western mold." In a similar vein, El-Miskin had advocated for a da'awah policy similar to this. According to him, Islamic movement that wants to have a successful outing against the West, counter its dominance and overcome its 'technological blackmail', must 'conceive and plan its programmes bearing in mind that technology is da'awah tool.' (El-Miskin 1989) The point of convergence of the intellectual submission of El-Miskin and Yusuf's ideological ministration is so striking in this respect. Alone Yusuf posits:

" If you ever believe that somethings in the universe does not belong to Allah, then your belief in Allah, as a Muslim, is questionable. You do not understand Tauhid from the standpoint of what Allah and his prophets explained. You do not belong to the creed of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Until you give possession of everything to Allah, you belief He alone is the inventor and creator of everything, it is then that you believe in the existence of Allah. Afterwards, you can now talk of worshipping Him." Hazihi." (Hazihi: 2009)

This could be why even at the point of death he told soldiers, in whose protective custody he was that the computers and other paraphernalia found in his house; as well as the textile from which his cloth was made, were all Allah's property. This belief still has utilitarian value for the adherents of the movement. In 2015, a hacker member of the group compromised the digital records of the State Security Service (SSS) and published online the personal details of about sixty spies. (Atwan 2015: 24) This was apparently to prove to the Nigerian state that its well-guarded secrets were nothing that it has exclusive right to. It was simply all the property of Allah that could be used in any way He wants.

Again, Hazihi captures it succinctly:

“It is also the submission of these materialists that somethings happen within His dominion that Allah detests. They also argue that Allah is not the creator of the affairs of men. So, if you come to discuss with many Muslims who subscribe to their positions, it will be a Herculean task to convince them that Allah is the creator everything including the products of man's intellect. This is the danger that Western education poses to Islam and Muslims without their knowing it. We all praise the West for all material things invented, but the truth is that all of these inventions are not as a result of the effort of the white man in anyway. They were all made by Allah, who unveiled them when at His own time and convenience. The similitude of white man's claim to ingenuity and creativity is like your decision to wash your shirt. When you want to wash, you take your shirt to the place you want to launder, you soak, add detergent and wash it. But the reality is that it is not your effort that cleanse the shirt but Allah's intercession. Allah is the one that removed the dirt, not you. If Allah did not will for the shirt to be clean, it will never have become. That is why Prophet Muhammad prays that Allah should cleanse him of sins the way He removes dirt from white clothes.” (Hazihi: 2009)

Yusuf asks:

“Taking these in to cognizance, how then will you allow somebody who does not have sky, earth, air, water or food; and you are not his creature, come and fashion laws for you and then you follow him?” (Hazihi: 2009)

There is no authority except that of Allah

One of the themes of Hazihi is the belief that enshrining and practicing Tauhid isn't possible without rebelling against Dagut, also symbolized by Judges and the police.

All those who worship tombs, Sheikhs, practice sorcery, report cases to Dagut are engaged in shirk in contravention of Allah's commandments. They are the ones that qualify for criticisms and condemnations. Our call, with regards to tauhid in the worship of Allah, is that of all the messengers including Prophet Muhammad.

Allah's instruction to mankind is for them is to avoid Dagut. Dagut is anything that is being worshipped if it is not Allah, and I explained that these include tombs, constitution of nations, jinns and the person that deliberately allows people to accord him excessive reverence. According to Ibn Qayyim, Dagut is anything that mankind elevates to a level beyond that of ordinary respect. That thing could be something that you worship, follow and obey. The Dagut of every nation is that to which the people report their affairs instead of taking such to Allah and His messenger. All these, notes Ibn Qayyim are the Daguts of this world.

The divine instruction about rebelling against Dagut is explicit in the Qur'an (Surah 2: 266). Allah reveals that he who rebels against the Dagut has found salvation and holds unto an 'indissoluble cord' that binds him to his creator. Dagut, although many, is categorized into five by some Islamic scholars, specifically Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahab in his book: Usulul Salasa:

- The devil
- He who calls people to worship him
- He who may not have called but condone people worshipping him
- He who profess esoteric knowledge
- A ruler who agrees that people should consult him, and not Allah, for solutions over their disputations

Both Shekau⁴⁸ and Pantami⁴⁹ agree on this categorization. There is also consensus among the following Islamic scholars, such as Ibn Hazil,^{50 51} Ali Sheikh (1, 2, 3),^{52 53 54} Ibn Qayyim⁵⁵, Ibn

48 Listen to Shekau's audio tape (2007) 'Bayani Akan Dagut' being part of a tafsir of the Holy Qur'an at Dutsen Tanshi in Bauchi town.

49 Ibid. Pantami's enumeration, captured therein, stopped short of the complete list. He terminated his explanation on the fourth category. It is not clear whether his account was edited by Shekau or not to make his point that Pantami was either ignorant of the subject matter or deliberately omitted the fifth category because dwelling on it will hurt the prevailing democratic system, with its 'faulty and kufr court system' which JASLDAAJ believes the Izala Ulama favor.

50 See: Al-Ihkam Fi Usulul Ahkam. Vol. 1. P. 97

51 Ibid Vol. 5: 173

52 See: Fathul Majid

53 See: Tafsirul Azizul Hamid p. 419

54 See: Adur Saniyyah (Vol. 10: 496) and Kitabul Hukmu Murtadd

55 See: Nuniyah

Kathir⁵⁶, Ibn Taimiyyah^{57 58 59}, Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahab⁶⁰, Imam Al-Qassim⁶¹, Jamaluddeen Al-Qassim⁶² etc, that adherence to the system of Dagut, especially on category five above, is kufr:

Yusuf explains:

If you take notice of the Daguts that we have outlined and you observe the behavior of people towards them, you will see that their inclinations are more towards Daguts than to Allah. The state has discovered that courts are money spinning ventures, so there are now courts everywhere conceivable. There are courts and police stations everywhere because people resort to patronizing them.

According to Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ali Sheikh, people flock to courts in droves. And, it is nothing but infidelity to Islam Shari'ah. People go to trade in disbelief just like they go to purchase commodities in the market. The Alkalis that are regarded as representatives of Islam are not. They are just representatives of the court. People have strayed from obeying Prophet Muhammad and turned to Dagut.

Allah says: "many of them don't obey Allah without performing shirk." (Yusuf: 106)

Those that institute the Dagut systems in the Parliaments, have turned themselves into idols who are rivals of Allah. They are opposing Allah whether they know this or not, whether they believe it or not and whether they intend it to be so or not.

Our reason for this assertion is that these legislators have arrogated to themselves the right to make laws concerning even what concerns Islam. Allah has not given them the permission to enact laws. Issues concerning blood, integrity, property are the forte of the Deen. Do they have any authority that have legitimized their rights to make laws whereas Islam has forbidden that? These legislators- members of the State Houses of Assembly, House of Representatives and the Senate have arrogated to themselves the authority of Allah by committing shirk. The act bowing to the mace is shirk. This is

56 See: Al Bidayah Wal Nihaya (Vol. 13: 139)

57 See: Majmu'ul Fatwa (Vol. 12:336)

58 See: As-Sarim al-Maslul Ala Shatimir Rasul (Vol. 38: 233. 528)

59 See: Majmu'ul Fatwa (Vol. 7:150)

60 See: Kashful Shubuhah

61 See: Tafsiril Kathiri

62 See: Al Ma'aruf Bi Mahasanid Taqwa

because they prostrate towards, they revere it excessively and they also love it passionately. They also accord the mace the status of deity. They don't perform any function if the mace isn't available. More so, any law made when the mace is missing is null and void. (Hazihi: 2009)

Firm and uncompromising stance even in the face of repression

The book, which in different places emphasis on the embrace of other worldliness and the shunning of materialism, the virtue of patience and piety, does not shy away from bloodcurdling chivalry that could serve as blood hounding catalyzers to adherents. It is replete with examples of electrifying sacrifices, in the name of Allah, by the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Its graphic description of such incidents, waxed into the ears of the followers at every opportunity is perhaps the reasons why those who know little about the movement's creed simply agree that the indoctrination process involves magical wands that are waved to serenade an adherent into 'blind followership'⁶³ and suicide modes. Instead, what is offered are words that challenges one's belief, a sort of 'can you do it' schemata that requires no answer but affirmative positive action:

“We should have coagulated adherence to our creed. We should be firm even in the face of brutality. While we are being beaten and maltreated, we should constantly remember and utter the Shahada like Bilal. We should resist torture and insist democracy is a farce, just like Ahmad Bn Hambal did. He was being caned and was repeatedly saying Allahu Akbar. When the first cane landed on his back, he said bismillah. At the second cane, he said alhamdulillah. When another lash was delivered, he gasped hasbunallahu wa ni'imal wakil. When the last landed, he said al-Qur'anul kalamullah laisa bi makalul. He delayed what would made his punishers satisfied that they have got him until the last stroke of cane. It will reach a time when you may be arrested and you will be subjected to indignities, but you should summon the courage to insist that you don't believe in democracy.” (Hazihi: 2009)

One may have expected that this theme will also include reminders about the need for waging Jihad, but this is not so. There is no single chapter in all of Hazihi devoted to the prosecution of major Jihad, which later became the slogan of the group. Unlike Hezbollah, which listed Jihad, at number six, as one of the ten pillars of Islam in its vision and goals (Khalil 2005: 25), Hazihi downplayed it significantly. Perhaps, Yusuf assumed that his readers and followers would deduce, from the title, that such demand, a given, from the rhetoric of the group, would surface

⁶³ According to Yusuf: “We do not belong to any secret cult as being alluded by some of our detractors.” (Hazihi introduction)

later, at an appropriate time. Undoubtedly, his anticipation was that ‘there are other books such as: *Al-Jihadu Fi Sabilillahi: Da’awatul Alamina (Jihad: A Clarion Call to Mankind)*,”- not extant, would follow shortly after the debut of *Hazihi*. The fact is that at about the period *Hazihi* was published, his position on Jihad, apart from seclusion, unconventional customs and costumes, was mild.⁶⁴ But, it did not avoid allusions and references to violence and its instruments. This is apparent when he wrote: “My gun will shoot anyone who disobeys Allah even if he is a Muslim. Allah,” and “the prophet said when you go for Jihad, you should say: *Ugzu. Bismillahi. Qatalu man kafara billahi, wa bi sabilillahi*”. - [Fight the infidels for the sake of Allah and in the name of Allah.]⁶⁵

His admonitions, although decidedly fiery, were then largely centered on da’awah and the explanation of his faith. For instance, he wrote that: “If Allah wills Jihad, there are those who hearken to His call. This is what we see and perceive.”

His take is that if Allah’s worship is allowed then let the nation live. Otherwise, let there be chaos, so that it will be everyone for himself. If they are not ashamed of propagating their ideals, why should be ashamed to engage in Jihad and da’awah?

A copious explication is given as follows:

The meaning of da’awah is calling unto people to come and worship their creator, in order for them to understand Allah in a dignified manner. The purpose of this is for them to worship Him solely without ascribing partners to Him. This is Tauhid, which is the first thing all prophets informed their people about. It is also the first thing that Prophet Muhammad called mankind to, socialized his followers to adhere to and cultivate enduring ideological stand. He also sent his companions to towns with the same messages. When he sent Muaz Bn Jabal to Yemen, he told him that you are going to meet a people who have their own codified laws, the first thing you should call them to is the Shahadah. You should remind them that they should worship Allah alone. If they accept Tauhid, then you should tell them about Salat five times daily. If they accept this, then you should inform them of the obligation of giving alms to the poor. (Hazihi: 2009)

⁶⁴ It should be understood that our mission is not to wage war against the government or people. If that was our purpose, we would have reacted when security agencies arrested 60 of our followers at Monguno over a dispute between them and members of the Izala sect on the ownership of a mosque there.

⁶⁵ Yusuf emphasizes that: “In case Jihad gets underway, for example, and Obama seeks negotiation and reconciliation, he may be obliged. But if it is another leader, who was a Muslim and later became an apostate, dialogue with him is forbidden. The only thing that will happen is to slaughter him.” (Hazihi)

According to Yusuf, all adherents of the movement must premise their actions on sincere intentions, backed by Ikhlas (fear of Allah) and the rely, for guidance, on the Sunnah (tradition of Prophet Muhammad). He stated that lack of these ingredients in the curriculum and conduct of Western education, is ‘why we insist that it is unlawful.’ He emphasized that: “Anybody who follows another person without clear proof of what his leader is up to also follows a Dagut. If you called unto anything that does not entail obedience to Allah, then you should reject it. These include patriotism, politics, working in government employ.

Citing Ibn Taimiyyah, he wrote that:

“In this da’awah, we will not associate with democracy. We will not vote. We will not embark on political party campaigns. We won’t establish branches. We won’t hoist any flag (except that of Shahadah). We won’t associate with politics and politicians. We are aware of that democracy that is now in vogue across the world, in the name of freedom and defense of the people (as government of the people), which boasts of delivering justice; but we know that justice is in what Allah has revealed and not in what man has designed.” (Hazihi: 2009)

He further wrote that: “Ibn Taimiyyah wrote that it is obligatory on governments not to dispense justice except with justice. And, justice is what Allah has ordained.”

To him,

Anybody that projects the opinions of polytheists or those that have gone astray from Islam, like Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Sina; or he projects the ideas of Jews and Christians, or follows their opinions, calls people to their ways or participates in it in himself, or he subscribes to their constitutional designs, or participates in democracy, such a person has committed shirk from the perspective of Allah’s rughubiyah.

In our da’awah, oh Allah, we have answered you. We submit that You do not have any partner, nobody that has created spoon or needle. No one has control over anything. Everything is Yours. We submit to You. All praises regarding whatever we got, possess, see or never experience; including luxury, goes to You.

In our da’awah and aqeedah, we believe that magic, sorcery and divination are all shirk. It is compulsory to stamp them out. We also do not believe that rainfall should be associated with the astrological ambulation. Crying over death is also forbidden. Ethnic antagonism and suspicions is also unlawful as it affects Tauhid. Affiliations to primordial sentiments such as tribes,

political parties, local government of origin etc are also forbidden. All these are aspects of Jahiliyyah and they weaken Tauhid and corrodes ideological cohesion. (Hazihi: 2009)

The prophet said, Hazihi notes, stated that:

“if you deal in speculative trades, engage in pastoralism, farming, (resulting in constant clashes between farmers and herders); and you all jettison Jihad for the sake of Allah, then Allah will cause you to be disdained and disgraced- soldiers jackboots and helmets (beatings, harassments and rape of women and children), skyrocketing prices of commodities and other indignities. Subsequently, Allah will not come to your aid unless you revert to His way. (Hazihi: 2009)

Democracy as the Temptation of the Era

Like al-Banna, Qutb and Osama, Yusuf too submits that the:

Constitution is disbelief. Democracy is disbelief. Military profession is disbelief. Police profession is disbelief. Nationalism as well as the idea of peace and unity are all disbelief [because they are based on the primacy of the Qur'an and Sunnah]. Leaders who work with the constitution are disbelievers and you should not obey them because they have altered the Deen. Whether they pray, fast, give alms or perform Hajj, they still remain Kafir.

Democracy is the shade under which disbelieve reclines, where polytheism is nurtured and where the legitimization of what is unlawful is attained. It is ultimately the bastion of the progress of Western civilization.

It is a system of disbelief, cult of modernity and a religion to those who practice it. We do not believe and won't work with it because it is a sect of the unbelievers. Following it, advocating it, profiting from it and helping the system is against Islam. It is unlawful for a Muslim to contest election or vote for a candidate under auspices of democracy.

The first Western scholar to articulate the concept was Plato. It is usually defined as the rule of the people by themselves. The people, under this system abhor the authority of Allah and any other form of spiritual authority except the temporal. They chose for themselves a justice system they feel will fulfill their yearnings and aspirations. This is where they went astray. How

can you prescribe a system of self-control and import the dynamics from an alien clime?

The assumption of the adherents of democracy is that the Qur'an is alien document. So, if one uses it to fashion his system of government, then he is under bondage. But, how come will you be free under democracy, which proclaims freedom if it too is packaged from somewhere and dumped here?

The etiology of the concept is from two words- demos (meaning people) and cratos (meaning rule). According to Uthaymeen and Jibril, if you say rule of the people, then the people are god. Does that mean the people are the judges and not Allah? This ideology contravenes that of ur Deen, which is superior, for Allah says: "there is no authority except His." But democracy insists that there is authority save that of the masses, who are free to choose what form of authority they want.

Under that system an unbeliever, hypocrite, sinners, or any other person could become the leader. Anybody that the people prefer becomes the leader. However, the installation of an unbeliever is one of the most dangerous thing that would befall the people. So, Uthaymeen and Jibril emphasized emphatically that democracy is Dagut which must be resisted at all cost, discarded and rebelled against. This is because the faith of a Muslim is incomplete until he rebels against Dagut. For Allah admonishes that he that turns his back against Dagut has held unto a very strong rope of faith.

Both Uthaymeen and Jibril posited that democracy is a conclave of unbelievers whose creed is solely disbelief of Allah. Therefore, it is *infra dignitatum* for a Muslim to support such an ideology or even project it. To promote such an ideology is part of the things that would render a Muslim an apostate. It is the stand of the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah that whosoever refuses to rebel against polytheists and advance its course in any manner conceivable has gone astray.

The projection of democracy in anyway only serves as a catalyst for the advancement of the apostate West, which is inclined to the worship of Greek idols when the persecution of Christianity became unbearable. Nonetheless, there is a gulf of difference between Islam on the one hand; and, democracy and secularism on the other. This is obvious if we look at the basis

of democracy and the methodology employed in propagating it. It is assumed that under democracy there is freedom of religion. This is disbelief. It means one could worship an ass if he chooses to do so. It is also assumed, under democracy, that everybody has the freedom of expression and speech. Third, democracy, assumedly, guarantees freedom to own property. Citizens also have the freedom to do whatever they want- dress the way they want, profess and practice any sexual preference of their choice.

According to Abu Mus'ab Ahmed Al-Zarqawi, democracy came solely to convince us that the masses are the repository of authority and their choices are sanctuary of all citizens. In the view of democrats, the parliament is the ultimate arbiter of conflicts and disputes. The fact of the matter is that this system of Dagut is simply saying that there is no appeal on the decision of the people. The parliament is seen as clinically ascetic and its decisions are unassailable. Its opinions take the front burner and its rulings are applauded as full of wisdom and just.

Whosoever upholds these tenets of democracy is elevated to greater heights in the society while its critics are degraded. The thrust of the democratic system is that whatever the parliament decrees becomes lawful while that which it rejects is forbidden. Also, the input of the parliament into the constitution is sacrosanct, just as any other thing that is not captured in the constitution lacks validity and is considered null, void, base and useless, no matter its sources- be it Islam. This is exemplified by the provision of Section 1 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which stipulates that the constitution supersedes any other law.

That slogan of 'government of the people by the people' is the yolk of democracy. It is the most expensive emerald of democracy. It is its fulcrum, anchor and without that slogan, democracy ceases to exist. This is the religion of democracy which people revere so much in broad daylight to the sheer rejection of Allah's decrees. (Hazihi: 2009)

"In plain language," Yusuf pointed out, "the giver of law under a democracy is man and not Allah," and so it forms "the basis of shirk and disbelieve" as the masses are the basis of authority, including matters on the dispensation of justice. His perspective is that man takes over the powers of Allah through the elevation of elective representation that will fashion laws for the country and conduct oversight on the execution of such laws.

How then can this be rectified? Yusuf gives premium to grooming and nurturing young minds for the da'awah:

“Anybody that is involved in da'awah and places emphasis on assembling geriatrics will not succeed. Instead, his focus should be on bringing up the young ones. As the enemies of Islam train their children in their ways, the Mujahidun to bring forth their own children in the way of Islam and crown them with headgear. Can't you see that every year they graduate thousands of students. How many Mujahidun have you graduated? You must neutralize their strivings. They will not feel challenged if they see that your movement composes of only the elderly. As a matter of fact, they will even send you donations, like they do the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN). The SCSN members are mainly old men. There are no youths in it and they don't groom young men. So, they keep getting donations and encouragement. But whenever they sense that a movement has the youths as its followers, then they know that it will go far because even if you eliminate the top hierarchy, there are many successors waiting to take over the mantle of leadership. Some of such youth may hibernate and hid their ideological inclinations at a time and come out with it when it is least expected. For instance, somebody (late Muhammad Auwal Adam Albani in: 'In An Ki Ji, Ba'a Ki Gani Ba...' - April 11, 2010)⁶⁶ said that what I am doing, of criticizing Western education, is part of the legacy my father bequeathed on me. Well, I accept it. The joy of a dying father is to have a worthy successor. (Hazihi: 2009)

Generally speaking, the movement profess in strong terms that it is against We are against Western education.

We won't work for government. And, we won't join the army. Now, that we have turned our backs against all these, they can only see us, but they cannot harm us as they don't know where

66 The full quote of what Al-Bani said in the audio tape: “Are you aware that Muhammad Yusuf's father was among the staunchest critics of Western education some thirty years ago? ... [Then], the emir of Gashua, Umar Suleiman, a highly educated person was campaigning vigorously for children to be enrolled in schools. But Muhammad Yusuf's father, an itinerant almajiri who hailed from Niger Republic, kicked against this. As a result, the emir expelled him from the town and he relocated to where Yusuf was born. He was later killed at Rijiyar Zaki in Kano, where he had gone to aid the religious war of Maitatsine in 1980. So, the 'Yusuf' that he bears is not the name of his biological father. He was his maternal uncle, who took him and his mother from Kano after the death of his father, to Maiduguri where they settled. This tells you that his father was the first advocate of Boko Haram; and what he did was to re-emphasize the creed of his father.”

we are coming from or what we are planning...Have you ever heard of one who deviates from his ideology? He who does not know ideology does not accept it. Aqeedah is not susceptible to change. It does not accommodate compromise. (Hazihi: 2009)

On Western education: Its Poison, Dirt and Danger to Islam

Yusuf cites Hassan Manar, a prominent Islamic scholar at the Ka'aba mosque in Medina, outlined in his book the legislations against Muslim parents sending their children to seek Western education:

“Oh! parents and guardians, wake up from your slumber of forgetfulness, Return to Allah the Greatest. Do not follow the foot paths of those who have gone astray, so that you will saved from the torment of hellfire. But if you allow your children to partake in Western education, then you have given them the license to enter churches. You have given them the chance to participate in the choir and you have allowed them to listen to campaigns of calumny against Islam. This is because anything that is strongly forbidden by Islam is being practiced in schools of Western education. Also, all those things that are detestable to good morals and conducts are freely practiced in schools of western education. Wake up, oh! Parents, as you have neglected that which Allah enjoined you to do about the upbringing of your children in the way Islam prescribed and by so doing protecting them from anything that is against the Deen.

You should all know that in adhering to this decree, there is an immense benefit you stand to derive. Contrary to your expectations that acquiring Western education is a source of getting high status and becoming rich, defending your Deen is much more profitable to you.

It is in quest for Western education that one learns to love the world and resist death. A mujahid has not cultivated the habit of material acquisition, so he is not afraid of death. To him, let everything be gutted by fire. On the other hand, the rich are afraid of rebellion. (Hazihi: 2009)

He also draws from the work of late Sheikh Mahmoud Gumi, who wrote in his book: Aqeedatul Sahiha Bi Muwafaqatil Shari'ah, that Western education is forbidden.

“The enemies of Islam,” he stated, “have resorted to degrading the spread of Islam in all manners conceivable. And, there is no place they have succeeded in their schemes than in the nurturing of projecting enlightenment, which undermines the

development of Islamic aqeedah. This is achieved by their distracting the attention of Muslim children from learning Islamic education and mastering Arabic. In order to achieve their aims, the colonial detractors of Islam wrote books that undermine Sunnah – fictions and books on divination. They also carted away all books on Islam and its creed to their countries. In addition, they killed many Islamic scholars and forced others too flee the country. These gave them the chance to embark on spreading Western education until it became entrenched as a system; and became accepted. More missionary schools were built to advance the cause of Western civilization. The benefactors of this system, whose parents barely clad or civilized in any way, later became government employees that were given material incentives such as official cars. Eventually, they became lords over Muslims, who were carried away by fictional ideas they learnt from fantasy books caused to be written for them by Sheikhs of some Islamic sects. (Hazihi: 2009)

He stressed that:

Upon realizing this, wrote Gumi, the Muslims now decided that the remedy to this problem was for their children to participate in Western education. As did so, they alienated their children and wards from Islam. They socialized their children in the manner that a hunter trains his dog. So, Muslims became divided into two (in Nigeria), - 1) Western mercenaries and/ or 2) their preys. (Hazihi: 2009)

Based on the foregoing, he emphasized:

All these Western missionary schools, established by the; colonialists, that legitimizes what the Shari'ah forbids, are embodiments of all things that oppose Islam and they are a clear evidence of why Muslims should stay clear of them or support them. It is in these schools that Western ideas, such as Darwinism, Marxism, Communism, materialism, democracy, secularism and concepts and practice of freedom, that negates Allah's creed are spread, All these ideas stem from Western schools.

Other ideas of Western education are the philosophy of reincarnation, the supremacy of nature, Darwin's evolution of species, the claim in geography that the earth orbits around the sun, that rain falls after cloud formation occasioned by the

evaporation of water from the earth, the linkage of rainfall to astronomy and astrology, emulation of Westerners, tribalism and nationalism etc. (Hazihi: 2009)

Replying his critics on the issue of a companion of the prophet who was said to have studied Hebrew under the tutelage of Jews on the instruction of the prophet himself, Yusuf argued that:

Imam Tirmidhi who narrated the Hadith about Zaid Bn Thabit learning Hebrew didn't put it under the category of the Book of Knowledge. Instead, he categorized under a different section. On his part Imam Abu Dawud categorized the Hadith under the chapter: "Unlawfulness of Studying Under a Non-Believer." The Hadith simply narrated that Zaid should go and learn Hebrew quickly. But there was no mention of where he should go and do so. It is false to say that he learnt the language from the Jews. Go and study the narrations. None mention what is being claimed by the Ulama. (Hazihi: 2009)

Essentially, the unveiling of the creed at the time it was done was not responsible for the overall radicalization of the adherents and the persistence of this over time. It only came as a codified whole when it appeared. Before then, different sermons and lectures had been released in doses over the period of fifteen years as the movement metamorphosed from Ta'ifatul Mansurah to Shababul Islam before becoming JASLDAWAJ. All these time, it never got entangled in violence. Instead, Yusuf's firebrand preaching drew youths to the group in droves, just as it endeared him to some hidden instigators, who, wanting to fulfill the requests of their overlords, recruited him to 'mobilize' more youths. He delivered while they developed some cold feet and backed out. By then, it was already too late to rein him in, so they resorted to chasing him from one place to the other until his in-law gave him his own sanctuary. As he settled down there, a legion of youths he had mobilized for the mission his recruiters had abandoned were already available for the next phase of the da'awah- Jihad. Although, many of them were arrested in batches twice, the friction between Yusuf and his handlers enabled him to groom a new group of blood hounds. The staying power of the group then was its population of youths, as we have seen above. They all came from different social class and mingled as one. It may be that those of them born with silver-spoon in their mouths saw through the fallacy of their luxurious live and rejected it; while the poor became convinced that the Markaz was their new home where they will be free to unleash their talents.⁶⁷

Gradually, the ideological fervor that they sipped intermittently became a poisonous nectar that they all gulped to sustain themselves and act swiftly and ferociously as the occasion arise. This is why despite the fact that they are battle-weary and scattered, the movement still thrives and retains the philosophy of Hazihi. As many of the old brigades perish in battles or get arrested, others focus on keeping the vanguard alive by recruiting more youths. According to a United Nations study cited on BBC News (2014), "younger commanders and fighters, (like those fighting in Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, Mali and Syria) have a different perspective on

⁶⁷ Communications with Mallam Aliyu Teshako 2011

international affairs, have the potential to generate propaganda that chimes with their generation more easily, and can also challenge their own leadership on tactics and targets.”⁶⁸

Wage Jihad If...⁶⁹

Against the backdrop of the persistence of the latter JASLDAWAJ ideology of Jihad, which as we noted didn't feature prominently in Hazihi, Uthaymeen cautions that Muslims should not confront those vested with power by Allah (SWT). According to him, if you confront him and he gets wind that you are planning insurrection, such a rebellion will cause a great havoc and a great deal of fitna. Such a rebellion will disunite Muslims, whether they are right or wrong.” He wrote that nothing has caused the retrogression of Islam more than the confrontation of powers that be by rebel Muslims. From the period of Caliph Uthman (RA) till date, power struggle between Muslims and established rulers has been the main reason of the decline of the Caliphate. Nothing distresses and disperses a people like these power tussles, he submits.

He wrote that, although Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has advised that Muslims may confront a ruler if they spot the proliferation of disbelief in the land, but three conditions must be fulfilled before such a rebellion is declared:

- All Muslims must be fully aware that there is widespread disbelief in the land. The dissemination of such knowledge to everybody must be beyond words of mouth alone. It must be undoubtable. It is a given, from this perspective that no Muslim can rebel against his leaders until what he is rebelling against is clearly known.
- It must be known clearly that what the leaders are being accused of is disbelief and
- not mere commission of sins. If it is the latter, then it is unlawful to rebel against them, even if it alleged that they have taken alcohol, fornicated or committed injustices against the people.
- Open disbelief denotes open disbelief. Anything that is doubtful or subject to controversy, cannot be construed as a basis for rebellion. If are witnessed to any sinful act being committed, which we interpret as disbelief, by our leaders, but if such is subjected to empirical test and proves not be disbelief, it is, thus not proper to dissent. Instead, we should be loyal to them, in so far as what they are doing is not against Allah's commandments.

The prophet, Uthaymeen added, said if a ruler decides to openly practice disbelief (drinking, homosexuals' and fornication) and decree that same should be allowed in his domain, it is then that it is lawful to fight against him even it means waging war. Again, the prophet demands that there must be a clear proof of a leader's inclination to disbelief. If the proof is weak or the reason to advance it has a drawback, then it is unlawful to secede or declare rebellion.

68 See: Al-Qaeda: Younger Men Take Up Leadership Roles- UN Study in BBC News (Feb. 20, 2014)

69 For detailed explanation of Uthaymeen's fatwa in this respect, see: Sako Zuwa Ga Yan Boko Haram, a video CD by Sheikh Al-Kaseem Abdul-Rasheed. It should be noted that despite these admonitions, the position of Uthaymeen regarding Jihad is still quite ambivalent, oscillating between caution and outright endorsement, if, for instance, “the leader tells the people to mobilize...” for Jihad (Al-Sharh al Mumti- Vol.8: 10-12)

According to him, this is because doing so will cause lots of tribulations and give birth to great unrest between Muslims that could lead to mass murders. So, if all the projection of disbelief by the rulers is evidently contrived and known, unless the rebels can act swiftly to unseat them, it is still not lawful to take to arms.

His submission is that if Muslims embark on war, when they are not ready to win, then it will create a condition where pious people will perish unnecessarily and the iniquitous will be spared to live their lives to the fullest.

The Way Out: Consensus (Maslaha) and Justice (Maqasid)

In this endeavor to highlight what his movement stands for and checkmate his perceived detractors who saw him and his followers as rebels against mainstream Islam, Yusuf' Hazihi lit a match, whose conflagration is yet to abate. The ideas he advances- the supremacy of Tauhid over all mundane affairs, spiritual appropriation of technology as a divine property, the rejection of all earthly authority except that of Allah, galvanizing of adherents to be prepared to face opposition and the need for them to be stoic if such occurs, passionate dislike of democracy, which is likened to evil and the conditional avoidance of Western education, regarded as a poison and danger to Islam- has made the movement a dreaded outlaw, a label they relish, believing that Allah's favors are reserved for the very few who obey Him and resist the ways of the multitude who had gone astray.

As the movement grows, it will be ten in few months, its ideological claim to the projection of a clinically ascetic Islam has been punctuated by its adulteration by criminal elements, rigorous and rancorous in-fighting, adoption of the label of Khawarij, a stigma that Hazihi labored enormously to reject, as a tool of castigation of the brethren themselves, has got it caught in a vortex of entrapment and revenge. All these has derailed any good intention, if any, that may have been enshrined in Hazihi as a code of conduct. Not only have the movement borrowed what it detests, it now uses it to mimic itself.

While the group is a quandary of its own, which its common interest of working against Tagut system gives it an edge to forge alliance at short notice, the Nigerian government is still dilly-dallying on what to do to overcome the situation. Lessons from other climes, where insurgency has stayed longer, and is now a wedge, have shown that their longevity has been as a result of the pursuit of unworkable policies involving massive show of force. In Egypt the Islamic Brotherhood has been around since 1920s, in Afghanistan, the Taliban has been around since late 1980s while Al-Qaeda, despite repeated claims of pulverization by the West, is as od as the Taliban itself. In all these scenario, like that of Columbia, where the FARC has been subsisting for about seven decades, the valuable lessons to be learnt are: certain parts of the North-East continue to be under the virtual control of JASLDAWAJ and the movement still run an abduction cartel that serves as a suicide bombing and hit and run counter-state, suggesting that the dangers it poses to the people and government of the country is still significantly high.

Although the government insistently hold on to its lethal method, the group has defied it in equal measure, sometimes ridiculing all of its effort in one fell swoop, thereby driving the morale and gallantry of the troops down to a mutinous level, as soldiers overstay in the war theatre, are

deprived of materiel and material allowances and are constantly killed; and the facts of these hidden.

All these have blended criminality with a faith-driven insurgency, both of which have become major sources of a conflict entrepreneurship cutting across much of West Africa. Although they do it for varying reasons, both the government and the insurgents work with codes of creeds- one deriving inspiration from the divine and the other from the secular, which has made it difficult for a compromise to be reached so far.

In order for a consensus to be reached, the government needs to take into consideration the nuances and innuendoes of the Islamic culture as portrayed by the insurgents and look at the overwhelming nihilistic attitudes and grievances of the insurgents. Essentially, government needs to comprehensively understand the extent of violations its practice of secularism and democracy has wrought on the Islamic culture. The wholesale gullible acceptance of Western-influenced ideas to counter JASLDAWAJ may in the end be counter-productive. For instance, the establishment of Arewa Television, with the financial backing of the US to counter the insurgency through designed programs, is now being massively criticized by Muslims, not adherents of JASLDAWAJ, who see it as a cultural and imperial invasion of the space of Islam by an infidel foreign entity.

What such criticisms indicate is that the realm of the maqasid is beyond domestic considerations alone. Historically, even the rejection of Western education in the North predates the insurgence of JASLDAWAJ. Many scholars have documented this. For instance, Abu Manga (1993)⁷⁰ traces the root of this rejection to 18th century and advanced the following reasons as why the system was resisted and rejected as kufr and bokokon wuta: 1) it is the unbelievers business and not Muslims, 2) lack of confidence and suspicion of the system, 3) the Ulama perceived Western education as having a 'brainwashing effect on Muslims, to the extent that the Sultan 'was obeyed in everything except in the matter of the school; and, 4) equation of Western education with Christian education at a time when Qur'anic education was in ascendance, better organized, popularly attended and in tune with the tradition.

Contrary to Huntingtonian and Kissengerian views that reduces the focus of Islamic movements, such as JASLDAWAJ, to local issues, the appeal of such movements, as we have seen since the death of Yusuf, is that it is sub-regional and global in outlook as it appeals to individuals in different countries. For this reason, it is important to treat the movement as an expression of the grievances of the Muslims, the way they understand rulership and the dispensation of justice. So, the government and other stakeholders should begin to address the causes rather than the outcomes of the insurgency. We may all choose to live in denial of the fact that the movement has a mass appeal that will calibrate it to the zenith of a vehicle of change in the future as we have seen in the case of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt, the FIS revolution in Algeria and the Taliban in Af-Pak.

70 Abu Manga, al-Amin article: 'Resistance to the Western System of Education By the Early Migrant Community of Maiurno (Sudan) is in Islam in Africa. (1993) (Proceedings of the Islam inn Africa Conference) Spectrum Books Limited. Ibadan

It should be taken into cognizance that even Western scholars, like Huntington (1991:72-73), have revealed that democracy is an anathema in Islam:

“A strong correlation exists between Western Christianity and democracy. Modern democracy developed first and most vigorously in Christian countries... Democracy was especially scarce among countries that were predominantly Muslim, Buddhist or Confucian. This correlation does not prove causation. Western Christianity emphasizes, however, the dignity of the individual and the separate spheres of church and state. In many countries, Protestant and Catholic church leaders have been central in the struggles against repressive countries. It seems plausible to hypothesize that the expansion of Christianity encourages democratic development.”⁷¹

The fact that both JASLDAWAJ and the federal government see each other's respective perspectives as threats to each other does not help the process of reconciliation. The government must engage the Ulama in crafting a conflict sensitive narrative and fatwas to entice the insurgents to see reason with the general society. It is critical that the Ulama too must begin to purge itself of inflammatory rhetoric that pits them against the adherents of JASLDAWAJ. A conscious effort should be made to seeing the insurgents as Sunni Muslims instead of the signification of Boko Haram, which they do not subscribe to at all.

It will also be relevant to commission an in-depth study of the problematic in which JASLDAWAJ goals and deeds must be evaluated:

- To discern their antecedents and explore ways of soft landing their hardline postures
- Uncover their plans which may make it difficult for them to make or implement important decisions that may be reached at future agreements
- Find out how to harmonize their resistance of compromise and their long-term objective of having an Islamic State.

At the completion of the study and the suggested evaluation, government should be prevailed upon to:

- Release, unconditionally, all JASLDAWAJ members incarcerated
- Embark on generic cessation of arrest of all its members
- Rebuild all mosques belonging to the sect that were destroyed in the North-East
- Grant pardon and amnesty, via a presidential executive order, to all of its members

From my experience, government's reaction to these demands, that have been repeatedly made by the movement, is that withdrawal of troops and the granting of their requests will only give impetus to criminal elements to further escalate tension. The government also feels that the movement will exhaust itself and lose the support of majority of Muslims. So far, the

⁷¹ Huntington, Samuel P. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. Norman

government has done nothing and criminals have added to the mayhem, just as it is obvious that the movement is less likely to die anytime soon as adherents, divided as they may be for now, continue to read and imbibe what Hazihi teaches.

Suffice it to say, the wider implication of this discourse is that the movement, as I pointed out needs to be thoroughly studied, examined and analyzed. It should be noted that although there were genuine reasons why the movement was established and evolved to the stage where it is now, future studies should search for the underlying motives of the real actors and shadow actors. This could be perilous, but it is worth contemplating and acting upon. Another issue that should be given attention is the measure of 'grievances' that gave rise to this problem.

Lastly, efforts must be intensified by the Ulama, traditional rulers, the media, NGOs and other stakeholders to put close surveillance on the activities of the Islamic extremists. They should not be dismissed as firebrand, uncompromising, unstable and Takfiri individuals who see nothing good in others.

Yusuf recited a poem as one of the reasons he wrote Hazihi:

“As I cannot escape the words of Allah, so also I cannot escape
from the words of man even if I am hidden inside a cave high
up on a mountain.”

This, in my opinion, should be the recipe for understanding this creed that has set not only Nigeria on fire but Cameroun, Chad and Niger Republic.

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